

Eurochild's 2026 Conference

“Conference on Child Protection System”

#EurochildConf Programme

16-17 June 2026, Aliathon-Resort, Paphos, Cyprus.

The conference is co-organised by Eurochild and its member, the Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children (PCCPWC), and hosted by the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The conference is co-moderated by representatives from the Eurochild Children's Council and **Bruce Adamson**, Human rights lawyer specialising in children's rights; Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and former Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland; Chair of the European Network of Ombuds for Children.

Tuesday 16 June	
10h00 – 11h00	<p>Conference Opening Moderated by Sabine Saliba, Secretary General Eurochild</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The President of the Republic of Cyprus will be represented by the Minister of Education, Sport and Youth, Dr Athena Michaelidou. • Deputy Minister for Social Welfare Mrs Clea Papaellina, Cyprus • Ewa Kopacz, Vice President of the European Parliament (Video address) • Ninetta Kazantzis, PCCPWC President • Tanya Ward, CEO of the Child Rights Alliance Ireland and Eurochild President <p>Inspirational speeches by two young people, former members of the Eurochild Children Council: Elisabet from Estonia and Michalis Tsangarides from Cyprus.</p>
11h00 – 13h00	<p>Introductory Session followed by interactive discussions with participants moderated by Bruce Adamson, Vice-President of Eurochild and children from the Eurochild Children's Council and a Networking exercise with:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macarena Céspedes Quintanilla, Vice-President of Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia; Global Director of Advocacy and Social Research at Educo; ChildFund Alliance representative in the Technical Content Team of Joining Forces • Sergio Costa Araujo, Invited Adjunct Professor at Porto Polytechnic School of Education; Collaborator Researcher at inED, Center for Research and Innovation in Education • Julien Vangeertsom, Former Chair of the Management Board of the Belgian Federal Administration for Social Integration • Vasylyna Dybaylo, Director, Partnership for Every Child • Ulla Siimes, Executive Director of Central Union for Child Welfare Finland • Lucija Vejmelka, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb; President of Steering Committee at FICE Croatia
13h00 -14h00	Lunch
14h00 -15h30	<p>Five Interactive Parallel Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining Child Protection and Care Reform Through Policy and Practice <i>Led by Irina Papancheva, Adrian Oros, Altin Hazizaj, and Anouk Moser Hope and Homes for Children International, Romania, CRCA/ECPAT Albania, and LUMOS. Romania and Albania</i> This workshop explores how EU policy frameworks and the accession process can drive child protection and care reform, with a focus on promoting family and community-based care through tools like the European Child Guarantee and Enlargement Reports. It also strengthens participants' advocacy skills by examining how global and EU instruments can be used strategically to influence reforms, drawing on country examples and identifying practical next steps. • Eurochild Children's Council Workshop on Child Participation <i>Led by the Eurochild Children's Council Eurochild</i> Description tbc. • Recovering Childhood: The Challenges Ukrainian Adolescents Face Today and Solutions That Support Their Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing <i>Led by Artem Mazur Kids of Ukraine Charitable Foundation</i>



	<p><i>Ukraine</i></p> <p>In this workshop, we invite participants into an open dialogue - sharing experiences, exchanging perspectives, and finding common ground. Together, we'll explore the key challenges Ukrainian adolescents face today and the approaches that truly support their emotional and psychological recovery. Through a short quiz, a brief talk, and small group discussions, we'll leave with practical insights and simple next steps for working together more effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>From Failure to Framework: Rethinking Child Protection Systems in the Digital Age <i>Led by Divna Prusac and Aleksandar Karov</i> <i>Center for Missing and Abused Children (CMAC)</i> <i>Serbia</i></p> <p>This workshop examines why child protection systems often fail to adequately protect children in digital environments and how these systems can be strengthened through practical, system-level solutions. Building on real-life patterns and field experience, participants will analyse a structured case involving online manipulation and AI-enabled risks, identifying critical gaps across sectors including families, education, social services, law enforcement, and digital platforms.</p> <p>Legal intervention to ensure access to justice for children and enforcing their rights <i>Led by Louise King and Chris Callender</i> <i>Children's Rights Alliance and Just for Kids Law</i> <i>England, UK</i></p> <p>This workshop examines how systemic failures in child protection persist despite existing legal frameworks, drawing on real litigation and policy experience to highlight gaps in the protection of children's rights. It explores how strategic litigation (through judicial review, compensation claims, and engagement with domestic and European courts) can be used to enforce children's rights and drive systemic reform.</p>
15h30 -16h30	<i>Coffee break and networking time</i>
16h30-18h00	<p>Five Interactive Parallel Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Access to Justice and Effective Remedy for Social Protection <i>Led by Prof Ann Skelton (Leiden); Prof. Jennifer Davidson (UK); Prof Ton Liefwaard; Rehana Dole; Mia Dambach (Leiden).</i> <i>Leiden University</i> <i>The Netherlands and UK</i></p>



	<p>This workshop explores how access to justice and effective remedies are essential to making social protection systems truly rights-based, accountable, and responsive to children’s lived realities, with a focus on the justiciability of socio-economic rights. Bringing together leading experts and research, it examines legal frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and practical pathways to strengthen children’s rights, while engaging participants in identifying how these approaches can drive reform across European contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>The local programme builder for local costed planning of (child)care reform: a digital enabler of the Ukraine Better Care Reform <i>Led by Francesca Stuer and Bogdan Mihai</i> <i>Maestral International</i> <i>Belgium</i></p> <p>This workshop presents the Local Programme Builder, a digital tool supporting Ukraine’s decentralised care reform by helping local authorities align planning with the national strategy for ensuring children grow up in nurturing family environments. It shares evidence on costing and planning models in child care reform, and engages participants in exchanging experiences and identifying effective approaches to improving the quality and coherence of decentralised implementation.</p> <p>Future Voices: Now it’s our turn! Turning Children’s Voices into Policy Action <i>Led by Sarah Menne and Lena Budach, and a young expert</i> <i>Bertelsmann Stiftung</i> <i>Germany</i></p> <p>This workshop explores how children and young people’s needs and perspectives can be meaningfully integrated into decision-making processes, drawing on insights from the peer-to-peer “Future Voices: Now It’s Our Turn!” conference model co-designed by Bertelsmann Stiftung and its Young Experts Team. It demonstrates how inclusive, peer-led participation formats can empower children and provides practical methods, facilitation tools, and insights for translating children’s voices into local policy and practice.</p> <p>A better alternative to banning social media for children under 16 – older children teaching younger children how to behave safely and responsibly when they are online <i>Led by Aurel Graur</i> <i>ICAM net</i></p>
--	--



	<p><i>UK and Spain</i></p> <p>This workshop presents a peer-led alternative to banning social media for children under 16, based on the ICAM partnership's programme developed with Eurochild and the Daphne Child programme. It shows how older students, trained and supported by staff, deliver workshops that build younger children's social and emotional skills for safe, critical, and balanced online engagement, while addressing risks such as manipulation, bias, and over-dependence on digital technologies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of Fifth Workshop TBC and Coming Soon
20h00	<i>Conference Dinner</i>

Wednesday 17 June	
09h00 -11h00	<p>Human Library (15 books in 3 sessions of 30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The Childhood that chose me' - Rima Puşic, CCF, Moldova • 'Starting where trust lives: talking about family separation in Roma communities' - Eleonora Chorbazhieva, Bulgaria • 'Every starfish counts' - Beatrice Darie, Fundația Serviciilor Sociale Bethany, Romania • 'Child Friendly Company: When business chooses Children and Strengthens Social Protection' - Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection, Kosovo • 'From a Small Town to a Strong Voice' – Mathias Kalja, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia • 'Do children's rights change systems – or do systems change children's rights?' - Carly Elliott-Scott, Together Scotland, United Kingdom • 'Children's rights on the European Parliament's agenda. Activities of the EP Coordinator on Children's Rights' – Monika Jagiello, European Parliament, Belgium • 'Book series: Play and Learn with Linos and Flora' - Nikos Papadopoulos, Cyprus Red Cross Society, Cyprus • 'The Right to Origins of Adopted Persons: what social protection systems still struggle to see' - Rosalba Mirci, Italy • 'Poor children in a prosperous country' - Serge Thill and Helen Portal, Ombudsman for children, Luxembourg • 'A weekend that makes a difference' - Suzana Vargovic, Breza, Croatia



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Child Participation: is it real?’ – Cyprus Children’s Parliament, Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Cyprus. • ‘Listening to grassroots voices: 15 Stories of combating violence against children across Europe’ – Zsofia Karetka, Daphne-Child and Terre des Hommes, Hungary. • ‘MOVE from Workshop to human library: Inclusive Physical Activities for Children with Disabilities as a Community-Based Social Protection Measure’ - Laura Kazilionė, Auto Moto Group, Lithuania • ‘Why I Take the Hard way out’ – Marta Manniste, Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Estonia
11h00 – 11h30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11h30 – 13h00	<p>Five Interactive Parallel Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUIDE: Stories of Guardianships <i>Led by Mariia Pavlova (Imago Foundation, Poland) and Stefanos Alevizos (IASIS, Greece)</i> This interactive workshop presents the GUIDE project and its findings on guardianship systems across 5 countries. Through videos and a participatory listening circle, participants will engage with real-life stories and reflect on the challenges faced by unaccompanied children and guardians. The session will highlight best practices, foster exchange among Eurochild members, and facilitate the sharing of key learnings and materials. It aims to inspire collaboration and contribute to recommendations that strengthen child protection systems. • From Children’s Voices to Action: Strengthening Trust in Child Protection Systems <i>Led by Helen Saarnik & Anneli Valner; Co-host (tbc) Vilis Brūveris (Latvian Child Welfare Network) and Anna Tiili (Central Union for Child Welfare- Finland).</i> <i>Estonian Union for Child Welfare</i> <i>Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland</i> This workshop explores child participation as a strategic tool to strengthen trust, legitimacy, and responsiveness in child protection and social protection systems, particularly in contexts of mistrust and polarisation. Drawing on the CHIPS initiative across the Baltic region, it presents practical approaches for ethically collecting and translating children’s voices into actionable policy, using interactive case-based methods and a “Human Library” format to share real-world dilemmas



	<p>and solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>When Collaboration Gets Messy: Working Across Disciplines for Children’s Well-Being <i>Led by Diederik van Iwaarden & Francesca Stuer</i> <i>Dynamics of Youth, Utrecht University (NL) and Maestral (BE)</i> <i>Netherlands, Belgium</i></p> <p>This workshop explores what meaningful transdisciplinary collaboration looks like in practice when working to improve social protection systems for children and young people, acknowledging the real challenges of working across sectors, disciplines, and organisational cultures. It creates a reflective space for Eurochild members to share honest experiences, learn from difficulties as well as successes, and strengthen cross-sector relationships to improve collective impact for children’s wellbeing and resilience.</p> <p>Concurrent Planning: a way to deinstitutionalisation in early childhood <i>Led by Jessica Manjón and Mónica Permuy</i> <i>Asociación Estatal de Acogimiento Familiar (ASEAF)</i> <i>Spain</i></p> <p>This workshop presents the ESF+ pilot project “PSDP” (Concurrent/Parallel Planning) in Spain, which aims to address delays in permanency planning for children in care and reduce reliance on institutional care, particularly for children aged 0–6. It proposes a paradigm shift in child protection practice by working simultaneously with biological families and planning alternative family-based care options, in alignment with the European Child Guarantee, to ensure faster, more child-centred and permanent solutions.</p> <p>Details of Fifth Workshop TBC and Coming Soon</p>
13h00 -14h00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Including Me Interactive Plenary Session on how to create inclusive child-friendly documents with children, inspired by work of the Eurochild’s Children’s Council and Learning for Well-Being (led by Laure Pailleau and Darren Bird)</p>
15:00 - 15:10	Closing ceremony by Eurochild Children’s Council
15:10 – 15:55	Closing Panel Discussion moderated by children from the Eurochild Children’s Council and Bruce Adamson



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sonia Vila Nuñez, Cabinet expert, on behalf of the Vice-President Commissioner Mînzatu • Anne Kayser-Attuil, Secretary to the CDENF at the Council of Europe • Jiří Švarc, Head of Unit for Social Policy, Child Guarantee, and SPC, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission • Sandra Aigner-Accardo, Project Manager at European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights • Elizabeth Canavan, Assistant Secretary General in the Dept of Taoiseach, Ireland - Representing the Irish EU Presidency
15:55-16:00	Closing remarks by Sabine Saliba , Eurochild Secretary-General

For further information, please visit eurochild.org/event/eurochild-conference-2026

#EurochildConf



Co-funded by
the European Union

